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ABSTRACT

Representing a selection from the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) Literacy Conference, these seven papers include: "Remarks Prepared for Delivery ANPA Literacy Conference" (Labor Secretary, Elizabeth Dole); "National Education Goal #5: A Challenge for Everyone" (Assistant Secretary of Education, Ted Sanders); "Literacy: Federal Perspective" (Senator Albert Gore); " Remarks " (Susan Anthony); "How People Learn or Fail to Learn to Read" (Jeanne S. Chall); " Remarks " (Christy C. Bulkeley); and "Education for All: The New Literacy in the Global Village" (Nat J. Colletta). (RS)

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SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION LITERACY CONFERENCE

(Washington, DC, July 23, 1990)

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News
United States Department of Labor
Office of Information Washington, D.C. 20210

SECRETARY ELIZABETH DOLE
REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
ANPA LITERACY CONFERENCE
JULY 23, 1990
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I am very pleased to be able to share some thoughts with members of an organization for which I have the greatest respect. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that **"To live fully is to be engaged in the passions of ones time."** It can truly be said that those of you gathered here today are living fully, because literacy is, indeed, a passion of our time.

It was nearly five years ago--December of 1985--when the ANPA Foundation Trustees formally established your organization as one of the first recruits in the battle against illiteracy. And since that time, you have been right out there on the front lines in this war.

Yours was a natural connection. Newspapers are, of course, meant to be read. And the sad fact is, that tens of millions of Americans cannot participate in this basic American freedom. That not only threatens your livelihood, it threatens our liberty. Simply put, people who are not well-informed about the world, the nation, or their local community, tend to shrink from their responsibilities as citizens. They don't vote, they don't attend school board meetings, they are on the outside looking in.

And in the past five years, newspapers across the nation have spread the message on the dangers of this threat. Your newsletter, editorials, sponsorship of adult literacy workshops, a national adult literacy symposium, and International Literacy Day, are just a few examples of the difference--the positive difference--you have made.

And just look how far we've come. Back in December of 1985, literacy was an issue far from the forefront of our national agenda. Through the efforts of ANPA, the ABC/PBS Plus Program, and the remarkable Barbara Bush, and a brigade of volunteers, we have succeeded in changing the agenda, and, in doing so, changing life for the better, for countless Americans.

Where does the battle against illiteracy stand today? While you can take pride in the victories both large and small, which have been achieved in the past four and a half years, we have not reached the millennium. Yes, there is still much work ahead.

500,000 students drop out of high school each year, and another 500,000 who do graduate are functionally illiterate. One in five of our current workers reads only on an eighth grade level--one in eight, at the fourth grade level.

I'm reminded of a story about Sojourner Truth, who, over a century ago, devoted her life to the fight against slavery. As she made one of her countless speeches, a member of her audience rose and remarked that what she was saying "meant as much to him as a flea bite."

And this American heroine responded, "That's just fine. The Lord willing, I'm going to keep you scratching!" Our job, ladies and gentlemen, is to make America scratch as never before--to keep literacy on the front burner, and to unite America behind the President's goal of a literate workforce and a literate society.

I believe, there are two principles that must be followed as we strive to meet our goals--principles to which this conference is dedicated; principles which are the cornerstones of my initiatives at the Department of Labor.

First, we must work smarter, work more efficiently, work together. Workforce literacy is not just the province of our schools. I believe that public education is a public responsibility--a responsibility shared by government, education, business, labor, and the media.

And, early in my tenure, I realized we simply won't make any significant progress in our government initiatives, unless we break down bureaucratic barriers that stand in the way of a comprehensive human resource policy.

I called Lou Sullivan and Larry Cavazos to meet in my office, and we pledged that the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, would work hand in hand in the literacy effort.

Many programs were operating in a vacuum--with little regard for possible duplication of services or program-strengthening coordination. All that has changed under the President's Literacy Task Force, Co-chaired by the Departments of Labor and Education. Now, we're working together to unite programs, to coordinate services, to put an end to duplication. And Secretaries Cavazos, Sullivan, and I, and our senior staffs, continue to meet regularly to further this process.

The second principle: We will achieve a literate society only if we fight the battle in every state, every city, every community college, every factory, and every school across this nation.

For, at a time when the United States faces the stiffest international competition in our history, the basic skills of our workforce are eroding at an alarming pace. Indeed, America faces a workforce crisis. Many in our labor force are simply unready for the new jobs, unready for the new realities, unready for the new challenges of the 1990's.

Today's jobs are more complex. They require better reading, writing, reasoning. More--much more--math and science. Over half the jobs in our workforce will soon require education beyond high school, and almost every job will demand a solid foundation of basic skills--a foundation sadly lacking in far too many of America's youth.

And our problems include those currently working--two-thirds of whom will still be in the workforce at the turn of the century. As technology increases, the skills of many workers are obsolete, or soon will become obsolete.

Bridging America's skills gap, and achieving a literate workforce is my top priority as Secretary of Labor. And I aim to make a difference in a number of ways.

Businessmen and women tell me constantly that they have jobs to offer, but the students coming out of high school don't have the basic skills needed to fill them.

Therefore, to help define the skills needed to survive in the workplace, I have appointed a blue-ribbon commission of business, labor and education leaders, Chaired by former Secretary of Labor Bill Brock.

I have charged the Commission to hammer out national competency guidelines that reflect work readiness--working definitions of the skills employers require and workers need on the job--what's necessary in critical thinking, problem-solving, communicating, math, and science. Local schools and educators can then use these guidelines to develop relevant curriculum for promotion and graduation.

I am also concerned with the so-called "forgotten youth"--the nearly 50% of our young people who do not go on to further education or training after high school. The United States is one of the few western industrialized nations without a formal school-to-work transition.

Our workforce is growing at only 1% annually--the slowest rate in 40 years, and that slow rate of growth is expected to continue into the next century. We simply can't afford to sit idly by, as young people move from low-paying job to low-paying job, without receiving any training that can lead to a meaningful

career.

In May, I convened the first-ever national conference on the school-to-work population, attended by business, education, and labor leaders. The conference discussed new and innovative programs, a number of which will be implemented through grants, which I will soon award to a number of business and education consortia. One example is the "2+2" program, where students spend their final two years in high school, and two additional years in a community college, pursuing an integrated curriculum in the classroom and on the job.

Part of a successful school-to-work transition is an effective Employment Service. But our employment service is still geared to the 1960's--a time of labor surplus, rather than the 1990's, where labor shortages can be found in many areas and in many industries. Perhaps this explains why the percentage of Employment Service hires in the United States has declined from 20% to 7% over the past few decades.

I am under no illusions about the difficulty of reforming the Employment Service. It has been tried before, and I have been told by some, both inside and outside the Labor Department, that this is a sacred cow which should not be touched. Well, when almost 800 million of your taxpayers' dollars goes to the Employment Service each year, we've got to try to rope this cow.

I am meeting with Members of Congress, Governors, employers and labor leaders to lay the foundation for legislation in the next few months.

My top legislative priority for this year is to refocus the Job Training Partnership Act, to target the most economically disadvantaged and least skilled youth--those prone to drop out of high school because of a lack of basic skills, or homelessness, or teen-age pregnancy.

My legislation recognizes that there is an urgent need for more than just training for a job. Many of our youth desperately need basic skills training, remedial education, literacy, counseling--a total support system which provides the independence, the self respect, the skills, necessary for a lifetime of productive work. I am pleased to report that the House and Senate are nearing final action on my legislation, and I look forward to passage this fall.

Included in this legislative package is the expansion of Youth Opportunities Unlimited--our new "YOU" Grant Program. I am seeking authorization for forty such grants. We have already awarded almost three million dollars each to seven localities with very high numbers of at-risk youth. They represent the highest poverty levels, the highest illiteracy levels, the

largest drop out rates, and teen pregnancies, gangs, and alcoholism. Our most innovative programs proven to turn young lives around will be targeted on these areas. In short, we're pulling out all the stops.

It's crucial that we also mobilize the business community in our effort. After all, it is in their vested interest to join our crusade. Both large and small businesses can expand and succeed only if they have access to a skilled workforce. And with the slow growth in our workforce, they're going to need these young people.

Therefore, I am challenging businessmen and women to give 10% of their employees the leeway to become involved in mentoring at-risk youth. Duke Power Company in North Carolina was one of the first recruits. It was at the Clemson University commencement, where I was fortunate to be sitting next to Bill Lee, CEO of Duke Power. Bill and I got to talking about my mentoring challenge, and he said, "Elizabeth, where do I sign up?" Duke Power has 19,000 employees--which means 1,900 new mentors. Needless to say, it was one of the most successful graduations I've attended!

I am hopeful that the ANPA Foundation and the newspapers it serves, can help--both in accepting my challenge, and in spreading the message. What a difference it makes when one person cares, and helps to point out the pitfalls and potholes on the road of life.

I'm also trying to expand the concept of apprenticeship, whereby workers receive training and instruction which are widely accepted, and which serve as "portable credentials." Employers throughout an industry, then know precisely what skills job applicants possess, and the process of matching employees with employers is greatly expedited.

I believe this principle, so effective in the construction industry, can be adopted in other occupational fields, including many in the rapidly expanding service industries. I will soon establish an "Advisory Board on Work-Based Learning," comprised of high-level officials from business and labor, to develop and accredit apprenticeship programs throughout fields other than construction, printing and machine crafts.

There are those who'll say that additional work-based training, increased literacy programs, and a business commitment to at-risk youth are "too expensive," or "just too much trouble."

I believe, however, that America's economic future depends on a philosophy that regards people not as a cost, but an investment--an investment worth training, worth safeguarding, worth nurturing. Our human resources are, after all, our most

precious resource. And, if we're to compete successfully in this complex global market, we'd better make solving our workforce crisis a top priority.

Yes, we have, indeed, travelled a long way since the ANPA Foundation first became involved in literacy. The purpose of this conference, however, is not self-congratulations, but acknowledging that our mission is far from complete.

And as we continue the journey, let us take heart form the words of a great American President. Almost a hundred years ago, Teddy Roosevelt confronted a new century and said, **"We are face to face with our destiny, and we must meet it with a high and resolute courage. For ours is the life of action, of strenuous performance of duty. Let us live in the harness, striving mightily; Let us run the risk of wearing out, rather than rusting out."**

Ladies and gentlemen, together, we will run that risk. And through our joint endeavors to produce a literate workforce and a literate society, we will help ensure that America's best days are yet to come.

Ted Sanders

(Assistant Secretary of Education)

National Education Goal #5: A Challenge for Everyone

1.Thank you. I am pleased to be here this morning and honored to appear before this group, which has done so much over the years to fight illiteracy. I am particularly impressed by:

- **the "Newspapers in Education" program, which promotes the use of newspapers in schools for instructional purposes;**

- **the "Family Focus" program, which motivates parents to use newspapers at home in helping their children learn how to read;**

- **and by the "Press to Read" program, which encourages and assists local newspapers in developing and implementing adult literacy programs.**

2. **It is natural that the newspaper industry should take the lead in literacy efforts. No one has a greater financial stake in building the nation's readership. If Americans were completely illiterate, there would be no New York Times, no Washington Post, no National Enquirer. (Well, the National Enquirer would probably survive.)**

3. **But what most people fail to understand is the degree to which all American businesses are affected by the problem of widespread illiteracy.**

4. **Consider the following consequences of functional illiteracy in the business world:**

   - **Campbell-Mithun-Esty Advertising of Chicago reports that only one applicant in ten can meet minimum literacy standards for mail-clerk positions.**

   - **Motorola reports that 80 percent of all job applicants fail an entry-level exam that requires no more than seventh-grade English. Motorola will have spent $35 million by 1993 to teach basic reading skills to employees.**

- **Out of 117,000 applicants for jobs with the New York Telephone Company, fewer than half were qualified to take the basic employment exam, and only 2,100 passed.**

- **At one major manufacturer, nearly 25 percent of quality circle groups contained no employee able to take clear. comprehensive notes.**

- **One study indicates that 36 percent of the Fortune 500 companies provide remedial courses in reading, writing, and reasoning.**

- **As a matter of fact, American business is spending $30 billion a year for training--but only a fraction is for basic skills.**

- **These figures are particularly disturbing because three-fourths of those who will make up the workforce in the year 2000 are already on the job.**

5. It was with such alarming figures in mind that President Bush invited the governors of all 50 states to Charlottesville last fall for the nation's first Education Summit.

- **Out of that historic meeting came our six national goals, the first time we have ever put into words precisely what we expect from our educational system.**

- **I want to read the fifth goal one more time, if only to reemphasize our commitment to its realization: <u>By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.</u>**

6. **The President and his administration have already moved to ensure that Goal # 5 is substantially achieved during the next decade. I believe a look at initiatives in the Department of Education will give you some idea of our increased commitment. Here are just some of the things our various offices are doing to combat adult illiteracy:**

- **<u>The Office of Vocational and Adult Education</u>**

  -- **We are requesting a 24 percent increase in the budget of this office--which is primarily (though not exclusively) responsible for literacy initiatives.**

  -- **This includes an increase of $44 million for Basic Grants to States and a $3.4 million increase for Adult Education for the Homeless.**

- **The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education**

  -- **We are requesting a hundred percent increase in funding for Even Start.**

  -- **This program addresses the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy by calling for programs that provide early childhood education as well as adult education and literacy services, with an emphasis on the idea of parents and children learning together.**

-- **Even Start, with its focus on "family literacy," is similar in concept to the ANPA "Family Focus Program." Both rest on the proven truth that parents are the first and best teachers.**

o **Research and Development**

-- **Recently I met with representatives of every important segment of the community--literacy practitioners, administrators, business executives, labor leaders--to hear their concerns about federal policy on literacy issues.**

-- **All have emphasized the need for expansion of services, improved training of teachers and volunteers, information on best practices in the field, and a critical need for a National Literacy Center.**

- **As a consequence, we are proposing the creation of a <u>National Literacy Institute for Research and Practice</u>**

  -- **This institute will serve as a clearinghouse for information on all Federal, State, local and private sector literacy efforts;**

  -- **will provide technical assistance for seminars, conferences, symposia, and publications on the many aspects of adult education and literacy services;**

-- **will set an agenda for research and development, and will disseminate information on research projects related to adult literacy--working closely with the OERI Research Center on Literacy now under competition;**

-- **will have as its Director a nationally recognized expert on literacy and a well-trained, highly motivated staff;**

-- **and will be guided by a board of directors that will include State and local practitioners, private sector representatives, volunteer organization representatives, and representatives from Federal agencies that provide major support for adult learning.**

-- **The Department of Education has asked for $5 million to fund this Institute for the first year, and we hope that the Department of Labor will contribute funding as well.**

-- **By the way, Simon and Hawkins (Sawyer) bills have provisions for a National Institute as well, but theirs would be free-standing, while the one we propose would be part of OERI, which is already deeply involved in literacy initiatives and could better coordinate planning and policy initiatives by all Federal agencies.**

- **National Adult Literacy Survey**

  -- **Funded by the Department of Education, this survey will gather information enabling us to estimate the literacy levels of adults aged 16-64 in order to provide a baseline date for progress towards the achievement of Goal #5.**

  -- **From this survey we will derive the first comprehensive assessment of adult literacy since 1975.**

-- **This survey, conducted in 1992, will guide policy makers in determining how best to allocate funds to populations most in need of adult literacy services.**

-- **From these data, we will also be able to show if any progress has been made in assuring literacy among young adults since the NAEP Young Adult Literacy Survey taken in 1985.**

7. **These are beginnings, the almost unbearably slow start that must rapidly shift into high gear if we are to achieve Goal #5 by the year 2000. But even though these seem to be difficult and discouraging times in the field of education, I am optimistic about the future. Americans have faced challenges before--right from the very beginning - yet we have always risen to the occasion. I am reminded of Abigail Adams...**

Senator Albert Gore

American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation Remarks

1990 Literacy Conference

July 23, 1990

Literacy: Federal Perspective

* Thank you for the invitation to participate in your 1990 Literacy Conference.

Thank you Wes Hasden for that introduction...

(FYI: Wes Hasden is a newspaper executive with The Chattanooga Times. He is special assistant to Ruth Holmberg, publisher of The Chattanooga Times. He serves on ANPA Foundation's Educational Services Committee and has been closely involved in planning this year's literacy conference. The Chattanooga Times is one of the sponsors of the program "City of Readers," a community-wide reading program financed and launched by General Electric. City of Readers plans a variety of literacy, reading, educational and cultural activities aimed at increasing the amount of reading, improving young people's attitudes toward reading and raising public awareness of the value of reading.)

Thank you all for the great work you're doing to help make ours a literate society. If more organizations followed your lead, we could wipe out illiteracy in a very short time.

I've looked at some of the projects undertaken by newspaper publishers and employees to help conquer the illiteracy problem. You certainly are to be commended for the many innovative approaches you've taken in getting attention drawn to the problem, in helping individuals get tutored in reading, in making people aware of where they can go for assistance, in providing books and reading materials in many instances, by encouraging community involvement in literacy activities, and in numerous other ways. Your efforts are tremendous, and our nation will be better because of them.

* I've been asked to give remarks on the problem of illiteracy from the Federal perspective. As you are aware, this issue has been one of deep concern to Congress for some time. And the reasons for this concern are many:

We're trying to compete in a global economy in an age where reading and writing are not nearly enough, yet millions of Americans cannot even do that and the problem is growing.

23 million Americans are considered to be illiterate, which means that they are unable to read or write above a fourth-grade level. Of that number, 4 million are completely unable to read

or write. Another 45 million adults read with only minimal comprehension.

Every year, another 2.3 million people are added to the pool of incompetent and marginally competent adults.

Literacy standards are edging upwards. Requirements for literacy, which are determined by the level of skills necessary to function in society, are constantly adapting to economic, social, and technological change. As technology and the information age demand ever greater skills, many people will encounter difficulty in effectively functioning in society.

* The workplace today is demanding higher level skills and scientific skills.

At a Joint Economic Committee hearing I chaired last fall titled Crisis in the Workplace: the Mismatch of Jobs and Skills, one witness (Cong. Martinez, Chairman of the House Employment Opportunities Subcommittee) stated in his testimony that ..."older and displaced workers are finding their lack of literacy an absolute bar to finding jobs in an increasingly service-oriented economy. Skilled industries, such as the emerging high-tech industries, are finding it harder and harder to meet their labor needs."

Jobs in the labor market are being created mainly in the service industries, but the jobs are requiring greater levels of education.

* Three fourths of all new jobs between now and the year 2000 will require not only good basic skills but post-secondary education as well. A lot of the jobs will require scientific skills and that's another big problem we have got to face as a nation. Fewer and fewer jobs are available to those without solid basic skills. The high tech age necessitates these skills and more.

* If we do not succeed in improving the basic skills of our population, individuals will pay a price personally and our nation will pay a price economically in the world market.

A National Assessment of Educational Progress report a few years ago (1986) on the literacy of young adults found that:

- Approximately 20% of young Americans between the ages of 21 and 25 read below the 8th grade level.

- Only 19% of this same group can comparatively shop.

- Only 20% can figure out a bus schedule.

- And approximately 43% cannot use a map to travel from one location to another.

We are reaching the point where we have people who cannot function at all in society. People who don't have the skills to hold a job, people who might not be able to travel to a job because they don't possess the skills to find their way, people who if handed money would not be able to spend it wisely.

* It is estimated (by the American Library Association) that illiteracy costs our nation $224 billion each year in welfare payments, crime, job incompetence, lost taxes, and remedial education. Literacy Volunteers of America have estimated a loss of $237 billion in unrealized earnings by illiterate adults. And billions are lost in terms of productivity and costs to GNP.

* Illiteracy will hurt us internationally if we do not get this problem under control. The nation will not be able to compete. It will not be able to produce goods and products that meet the standards or requirements of a global market.

Today:

-Four out of five new jobs in the U.S. are created as a result of foreign trade.

-One third of corporations in the U.S. are either owned or based abroad.

-More than 6,000 American companies have at least some of their operations abroad.

-Foreign investment in the U.S. totals more than $260 billion annually.

* In order for our nation to maintain and improve our standard of living, to compete effectively in the world economy, and to remain a world power, we must address the problem of illiteracy. For these reasons, literacy is a strong concern of

mine and of my colleagues in Congress. And that is why efforts are underway in Congress to bolster the battle against illiteracy.

* Last February, the Senate approved by 99-0, the National Literacy Act, a bill to launch a comprehensive and coordinated campaign to erase adult illiteracy. A companion literacy bill is being worked on by the House of Representatives.

* The Senate bill, of which I am a cosponsor, will authorize a number of new initiatives to help our nation wipe out illiteracy. It calls for:

-Creation of a National Literacy 2000 Federal Interagency Council to coordinate and monitor existing programs and to establish Federal goals for the elimination of illiteracy by the year 2000.

-Coordination of all literacy-related programs in the Department of Education by the assistant secretary for vocational and adult education.

-Creation of a National Center for Literacy, with authorization for $10 million in 1991, to provide a national focal point for research, technical assistance, policy analysis and information dissemination in the literacy area.

-$15 million in fiscal 1991 for literacy resource center grants to states. Grants would be awarded for no more than three-year periods with a cap of $500,000.

-Expansion of adult education teacher-training programs and an increase in the number of full-time professional adult educators.

-$100 million in fiscal 1991 on top of the current appropriation of $160 million for basic adult education. In fiscal 1992 and 1993, the authorization would go up by $100 million over the preceeding year's actual appropriation. The Bush administration is proposing $200 million for 1991.

-$60 million in fiscal 1991, an increase of $10 million, for the existing Even Start program, which helps pre-schoolers and their parents in order to give the children a good educational start.

-$10 million for 50 to 100 demonstration grants to non-profit groups to develop intergenerational learning programs for children aged 3 and under and their low-income, illiterate parents.

-$2 million in grants during fiscal 1991 to libraries to aquire books, tapes, and computer software.

-Provision for college students to become literacy tutors under the Work-Study program of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The proposal would provide more funds to schools that place students in tutoring jobs rather than in routine campus jobs.

-$5 million for literacy challenge grants under the VISTA program to encourage partnerships among volunteers, business, non-profits and government to provide community literacy programs.

* The House companion bill:

-The House has incorporated the provisions of its literacy legislation into a larger education measure, the Equity and Excellence in Education Act. I was pleased to see the House debate and pass this legislation last Friday (7/20).

-The House and Senate must hold a conference to work out some differences in the respective bills, however the bills are not that far apart. The prospects of getting a literacy bill signed into law are very promising during this session of Congress.

* I have sponsored legislation that I believe will help in the effort to combat illiteracy and to get our students better prepared to function in the information age...

The High-Performance Computing Act will create the National Research and Education Network, a high-speed computer network that will connect more than one million researchers, educators, students, and librarians in schools throughout the country. The network will give students and others access to "digital libraries" of books in electronic form. In addition, it will

allow computer users to utilize computerized tutors that can help them learn to read, write, and do arithmetic.

I am optimistic that this legislation will be approved by the Senate this year as well.

* The future will require ours to be a much more literate society. We must take every possible step to eliminate illiteracy in our nation.

* At a time in our history when vast amounts of knowledge are available to every one of us, it is a national shame that millions of our fellow citizens do not hold the key to unlock that knowledge and to use it to improve their lives. Literacy is the key to a brighter future for those who cannot read and literacy for all is the key to the future for a nation that desires to out-compete, out-produce, and out-think any country on earth.

Let us do everything within our power to make literacy for all a national reality.

Susan Anthony
American Newspaper Publishers' Association
Literacy Conference
July 24, 1990

Three years ago publisher Ray Gover attended an ANPA publisher's conference where Jonathon Kozol Spoke.

Kozol, author of Illiterate America, said that 45 percent of people in the United States don't read newspapers. He then said 10 percent of those people make that decision by choice. The other 35 percent cannot read newspapers.

An alarmed publisher returned to central Pennsylvania where his community service department staff had been learning similar illiteracy statistics.

According to our local literacy council, for instance, 24.6 percent of adults in Harrisburg need literacy assistance.

Acknowledging part of The Patriot-News mission statement in serving as a catalyst for improving the quality of life in central Pennsylvania, we took the literacy plunge.

The Patriot-News in year one of its literacy involvement jumped feet first in the shallow end of the pool.

First, we researched what other newspapers across the country were doing with literacy.

Second, we investigated existing services in the Harrisburg area from Volunteers of America to Catholic Social Services (with each offering a specific form of instruction from computer-based learning to English as a second language) to determine an organization that might benefit most appropriately from Patriot-News assistance. Thus began our relationship with the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council.

Third, community service formed an in-house literacy task force, a group of employees, both management and staff, from all departments, to meet one time to share what we knew about literacy and to develop ideas about what The Patriot-News might do.

Our first year literacy efforts included:

a. An invitation to employees to train as tutors for the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council. Several responded.
b. Newspapers were provided at no charge by the circulation department to literacy council tutors and students.
c. Financial underwriting of the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council.
d. Editorial coverage for International Literacy Day of literacy volunteer and her student - who we reported succeeded in reading so well that she got a new job, was treated to dinner at a local 4-star restaurant and found out, at her moment of celebration, that the menu was in French.

e. An explanation of The Patriot-News literacy program in the employee newsletter.

f. Tutor workshops by our Newspaper in Education coordinator on how newspapers can be used as an interesting, timely, inexpensive teaching tool with adults.

The Patriot-News became a little more confident and assertive in its second year of literacy involvement. Rather than wait for cues from the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council, instead of jumping feet first in the shallow water, we took a dive into the deep end.

We continued to offer all the services of year one but enlarged on promotion and education.

A public awareness campaign, "Building Bridges to Literacy," was carried from billboard to bus cards and represented a Patriot-News goal to tie the East and West shores of the Susquehanna River together, to connect literacy groups with reading councils, to connect business and educational efforts in a positive way.

The Patriot-News teamed up with the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council and the Capital Reading Council to write, design and produce a brochure for employers. The brochure offers insights into who on the job might not be able to read. 10,000 copies of the brochure were printed in-house and distributed by the literacy council.

In recognition of National Newspaper Literacy Day, September 8, the editorial department published a 12-page tabloid insert for ***The Patriot*** and ***The Evening News***. Stories were mostly from the wire, although a few stories were localized. The tabloid carried no paid advertising.

Sept. 8 also began a month long newspaper ad campaign. A different ad appeared daily in various sections of the newspaper with information about illiteracy on national, state and local levels and requests from our Literacy Council ranging from needing tutors, needing students, needing volunteers to needing funding.

The ad designs were part of a marketing and advertising contest through INMA in 1986 and are available through ANPA.

The ad series and editorial tabloid, coupled with the billboard and bus cards, resulted in more than 400 phone calls to the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council. A handful of calls were from potential clients.

The Patriot-News and Waldenbooks helped the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council raise money by sponsoring an employee book fair. We surveyed employees as to reading habits; we held the fair on a payday; we reminded employees through flyers, posters and paycheck stuffers.

Waldenbooks set up shop in our conference room, sold books to two shifts of employees, and gave 20 percent of their total sales to the literacy council. We raised several hundred dollars and employees enjoyed shopping on the job.

The Patriot-News literacy program is administered through the community service department and Newspaper in Education.

Harrisburg School District is supportive of NIE, we we approached the district about a dual pilot partnership in NIE and literacy. Our thought was simple - we wanted to involve children, children who in a non-threatening way might be able to spread the word to family, friends, neighbors that there is help for those who can't read. We also wanted to involve children to recognize and applaud their emerging literacy skills.

Harrisburg School District formed its own literacy task force of administrators, reading specialists and librarians. Reading teachers prepared a literacy curriculum for elementary use. Librarians encouraged products: a fourth grade class produced An Alphabet Word Book with cassette tape as well as a brochure to help those who read to find literacy assistance for those who can't read. A fifth grade art class created a marionette show based on the elementary book My Mom Can't Read by Muriel Stanek which they performed at a shopping mall.

The Patriot-News also assisted the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council with its annual volunteer recognition dinner. Traditionally, the event occurred in a church social hall with perhaps 25 in attendance. This time the dinner was held at a local hotel and featured Wilson Goode, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, who talked about the Mayor's Commission on Literacy. More than 100 people attended; corporate tables were encouraged; a program with paid advertisements was produced; money was earned for the literacy council with this event.

The dinner was a fitting conclusion to year two of literacy for The Patriot-News. And I think it is safe to say that we didn't come up for air between year two and three. In a first and second year of involvement with literacy, The Patriot-News theme "Building Bridges to Literacy" served as an appropriate call to action. But a third year of heightened activity, this year, was marked by action itself. "Harriburg Reads" served as The Patriot-News focus in 1989-90. Believe me, this is the year we did freestyle. Our involvements included:

1. Organizing an **International Literacy Day/National Newspaper Literacy Day celebration** on Sept. 8 in a downtown shopping atrium. More than a dozen local literacy providers exhibited their materials and talked with hundreds of lunchtime shoppers.

2. Creating through Stephen R. Reed, Mayor of the City of Harrisburg, a **Mayor's Commission on Literacy**. Area literacy providers are charged with unifying and strengthening existing literacy services. I serve as acting chairperson until the commission is organized.

3. Encouraging the Mayor of the City of Harrisburg to adopt **"Harrisburg Reads"** as a city slogan. The slogan has appeared on four street banners; 5,000 bumper stickers; 10,000 balloons, 26,000 city utility bills; and is to appear on 1,800 park benches.

4. Publishing a daily in-depth **editorial series** on literacy between Sept. 3 through 9, which resulted in additional clients and volunteer tutors for the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council.

5. Printing an **advertising series** between Nov. 6 and Dec. 21 with 18 individual ads titled "Harrisburg Reads". Each advertisement featured a photograph of an quotation on the value of reading by area role models. More than a dozen people called the phone number for additional information.

6. Assisting with coordination of the **National Conference on State Literacy Initiatives III** held in Harrisburg, April 2-4. The Patriot-News brought government, business and education officials together to propose a national literacy meeting for Harrisburg. An executive conference steering committee, representing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the National Governors' Association, Harrisburg School District and The Patriot-News, organized a conference attended by more than 300 individuals from more than 30 states, including several state First Spouses. First Lady Barbara Bush opened the conference with remarks.

Besides serving on the steering committee, The Patriot-News was responsible for the volunteers contingent and the media. The Patriot-News editorial staff provided daily in-depth coverage of the conference. The Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council received more than 50 telephone calls as a result of conference coverage.

7. Published **classified advertisements** in April suggesting that employment and financial advancement may be available to those who are better readers. The Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council received more telephone calls than the office staff could handle, and the ads were discontinued after running three days.

8. Helped in coordinating the Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council **annual meeting** May 16 at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg. Mrs. Ellen Casey, Pennsylvania's First Lady, met with more than 100 guests and assisted with an awards ceremony. The event increased council membership and was financially profitable.

9. Participated in **Reading in the Mall** on May 12 at suburban mall through the Capital Reading Council, Dauphin County Library System and Waldenbooks. Storytelling was appreciated by children and educational materials for parents were available in a day-long annual celebration.

10. Published the first of a weekly **Books page** in *The Patriot* and *The Evening News* on June 4. The intergenerational literacy page includes best-seller lists, features and reviews. Of particular significance is Young Readers, children's books reviewed by area young people, and reviews of books written for parents to aid in child development. Reader response has been excellent.

11. Assisted the Pennsylvania Center for the Book along with the Capital Reading Council and the Children's Literature Council of Pennsylvania in organizing Reading Around the Rotunda, a summertime read-aloud experience for children touring our state Capitol. Area celebrities and professional storytellers have read to grade-school children several times during the summer.

As you may have noted from Patriot-News involvement in literacy, newspapers can promote literacy, newspapers can fund literacy, newspapers can educate and inform about literacy.

But our work is only possible through building bridges, making connections, forging alliances. Patriot-News participation has only been possible through partnership - in our case, the local reading council, the local literacy council, local and state government and education through Newspaper in Education as well as our own editorial, circulation, advertising departments.

I believe that coalition building or community empowerment is one of the most important roles we as individual newspapers and as a newspaper industry can play with literacy.

It's a challenge because there seems to be a lot of turfdoms or territories in literacy. NIE people share, so this is a new experience for us. However, we can be a voice of unity.

It's a challenge because local literacy councils are pretty anxious over being placed in the spotlight. Local Literacy groups are receiving attention and they are uncertain of growth and development. WE can lend a hand in organizing.

It's a challenge to newspapers because we as newspapers are used to promoting and informing and persuading. We aren't necessarily used to lending.

Newspapers and the industry can lead - we can bring strength and unity and order to literacy. We can bring principal players together. We can serve as a primary agent of positive change.

Susan L. Anthony
Manager, Community Service Department
The Patriot-News Co.

How People Learn or Fail to Learn to Read

Jeanne S. Chall
Harvard University

Paper presented at the
1990 American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation
Literacy Conference
Washington, DC
July 24, 1990

I am delighted and honored to be here.

I have thought long and hard about how to best use my brief time to present what is going on in literacy. For there are many problems with literacy and in spite of many good efforts, things seem to be getting worse. After much thought, I decided to focus on one issue that is current today--among reading educators, teachers, educational publishers, and education writers. The issue is whole language and whether it produces better results than the other methods it claims should be replaced by it.

I will treat this lively and often explosive issue from the standpoint of theory, research, and practice--and will attempt, further, to place it in a historical context.

First, what is whole language? It depends a good deal on who is doing the defining. Some point to its opposition to basal readers--the reading textbooks and workbooks used almost universally in the U.S. till quite recently (Pearson, 1989). Others place whole language on the side of reading "whole books," not short selections as in basals; still others stress that whole language means no teaching of skills, as opposed to doing so in basal reading programs. For others, it means empowering teachers to teach reading as they wish. For still others, it means integrating the teaching of reading with writing, speaking, and listening. And for a growing number, it means a philosophy of education and of life, not merely a method of teaching reading (Goodman, 1986). For these reasons it is difficult to discuss whole language since it differs widely from person to person, and even includes, in some schools, using basal readers as components

of a whole language program.

There is a further problem in discussing whole language--the tendency of its proponents to claim novelty for the use of many good practices when history tells us they have been in wide use for a long, long time. For example, many whole language proponents claim that their use of "authentic" literature is a unique feature of their program. Yet authentic literature has been a part of reading instruction since Noah Webster's Spelling Book. Although whole language proponents tend to blame phonics instruction on a paucity of literature in reading instruction, one should note that during the past two decades, the amount of literature in the reading textbooks increased as the teaching of phonics increased. Early writing also came with more phonics. Further, the combined use of reading, writing, language, and speaking has been the basis of remedial instruction since the early 1920s.

For my presentation, I will consider whole language mainly with reference to its stand on phonics. As will be seen, I think it is perhaps the most essential distinction between whole language and the approaches it wishes to replace.

I will discuss, first, the whole language/phonics issue by considering the reading research and theory of the past 20 years, the resulting applications, and the accompanying rhetoric.

Second, I will consider the effects of whole language and of phonics on reading achievement--whether whole language or phonics produces better results.

But before I take up these questions, I must say first that the great national concern for literacy stems from profound changes in the United States--changes in economics, technology, and culture. We are reminded daily by economists that we may slip from our status as a world class nation if our work force does not become more literate. They remind us that, when we were a manufacturing nation, fewer people needed to be highly literate. But an economy based on high technology needs more people who are highly literate. Indeed, there seems to be a growing mismatch between workers and jobs--with jobs that cannot be filled because workers are not literate enough. But it is not for work alone that there is a mismatch. Responsible citizenship also requires more literacy than it did two decades ago, and personal literacy needs seem also to grow with time. The labels on food and medicine packages require considerable reading ability (Chall & Henry, in press).

I know this is well known to you. But it is important to keep in mind that the standards of literacy keep increasing. At the present time many propose that a minimum standard be the ability to read and write complex written materials critically and creatively in order to solve problems.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress has labeled this standard of literacy the adept level, equivalent to the reading achievement of those in the upper grades of high school (Mullis & Jenkins, 1990). In my developmental scheme of reading, I call it Stage 4, the ability to read difficult materials such

as the New York Times or Time magazine--or about a 12th grade level on standardized reading tests, a level that permits reading with understanding and critical reaction of difficult texts for information and problem solving (Chall, 1983a).

Whole language appears to be a rather recent phenomenon, but it has deep roots in the past. It began to surface during the 1970s among a group of reading educators who viewed reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game. They held that meaning and language were the primary components of reading, right from the start, and that, at all levels, reading was a matter of prediction and individual reaction to text. According to this viewpoint, accuracy of word recognition came from making correct predictions--not through instruction in phonics. This conception of reading later became the foundation for the whole language movement. Those holding to this view based their conceptions not on research evidence, but mainly on linguistic theories. The whole language group's major concern is for beginning reading and less for mature reading. But even beginning reading, they hold, is mainly a reasoning process, one that is based on the readers' predictions as they read for meaning. The recognition and decoding of words is minor, used only by poor readers who do not read well for meaning. Therefore, at all levels, reading involves mainly language and reasoning. It is through the use of reading for meaning and communication that the beginner acquires the ability to recognize and decode words, not by being taught the association between letters and sounds, and then reading for

meaning. Reading is learned best, whole language proponents claim, when learned as language is learned--naturally--always in context and not through deliberate teaching.

Thus the whole language proponents tend also to underplay teaching, and particularly direct teaching of skills. They prefer to view reading as meaning getting right from the start and at all stages of reading development, and tend to overlook or even show a not too subtle contempt for instruction in the phonological aspects of reading, phonics, decoding--even for beginners and for those with learning disabilities and dyslexia.

The theory behind whole language is that reading development is essentially language and reasoning development. To prevent problems in reading, it claims that one must focus on the reader's language and thought, from the very beginning to the highest levels of proficiency.

What about recognizing and decoding words? Do they have a place in defining reading? Indeed, doesn't literacy itself depend upon acquiring knowledge about print, since even the preliterate child and preliterate peoples have language and thought, but cannot read? And those who have the most severe problems in learning to read--those with learning disability or dyslexia whether children or adults--seem to do well with language and thought when tested orally, but not when reading?

In answering such questions, the whole language response has been that learning how to recognize print comes naturally from being read to and from practice in reading connected texts. It

does not need to be taught. Indeed, if taught, it may interfere with reading acquisition (Smith, 1979).

Indeed, these conceptions resemble the practices which began in the 1920s and which favored, for the early grades, experience charts (i.e., the child's own language production) in the place of reading textbooks. Then, too, the child was expected to infer sound-symbol relations. The teaching of letter-sound relations directly was not favored by the reading educators of the 1920s. Instead, emphasis was placed on learning words, on whole word or sight methods. Similar to whole language proponents today, they claimed that the best route to word recognition and decoding was through reading whole words and sentences, for meaning, right from the start. These conceptions of reading were predominant from the 1920s to about the late 1960s. From the late 1960s through the early 1980s, there was a return to an earlier conception--that teaching of letter-sound associations as well as the reading of stories was more effective for learning to read. This came about, at least in part, from a synthesis of the research from 1910 to 1965 that found early and stronger phonics at the beginning produced better reading achievement--word recognition and reading comprehension (Chall, 1967; Bond & Dykstra, 1967). It has been further confirmed during the past 25 years (Chall, 1983b, 1989; Feitelson, 1988; Adams, 1990).

During the past 20 years, there has been also a growing body of data on the importance of the phonological component in learning to read. Based on theories of psycholinguistics,

cognition, child development, and learning disabilities, many researchers have reported the centrality of phonology (phonics, decoding, word analysis) in reading development. If not learned early, phonological factors may interfere with the use of language and reasoning in reading development (Chall, 1983a; Stanovich, 1986). And for older students with reading problems, meaningful language and cognitive difficulties may not be their central difficulty. Their main difficulty may be phonological, which further leads to their difficulty with fluency and comprehension. Research on very young children has further confirmed earlier findings of the 1930s that phonological awareness of words--e.g., segmentation and blending of words--tends to be a more potent predictor of beginning reading than word meaning and intelligence (Chall, 1967, 1983b).

Those concerned with phonological factors in reading tend to view reading as developmental, with beginning reading essentially different from more mature reading (Chall, 1983a). By way of contrast, the whole language proponents view beginning and later reading as essentially the same process (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). To sum up, the whole language proponents, although they may differ on specifics, tend to define reading as primarily a linguistic and cognitive activity. Few look to phonology as a factor. Indeed, it is often mentioned as an issue from which whole language distances itself.

How have the whole language conceptions played themselves out in practice? Has reading instruction changed? And have

these changes in practice resulted in improved or lowered achievement scores?

Let me state at the outset that it is extremely difficult to know how reading instruction is practiced during given periods of time and in given places. One can only approximate and infer, since we do not have national surveys of how reading is taught in classrooms. Therefore, we must rely on indices that reflect practice. For Learning to Read: The Great Debate (1967, 1983b), I made judgments about the use of methods in classrooms by analyzing the readers and teacher's manuals of widely used basal readers. Others have done the same since (Durkin, 1983). Have the basal readers changed over the past 20 years? Yes. They have, during the 1970s as compared to the 1960s, contained earlier and more instruction in phonics and used a more extensive vocabulary. In the 1980s, as compared to the 1970s, the amount of phonics instruction declined (Meyer, Hastings, & Linn, 1988).

Has reading achievement reflected these changes? From 1971 to 1988 there have been six national assessments of reading by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Let us start with the NAEP scores for trends in reading achievement over the past 20 years and try to infer the possible influences of the new reading conceptions on practice and on achievement.

From the National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Reading Report Card, 1971-88 (Mullis & Jenkins, 1990), we learn that, during the 1980s, there was a decline in reading scores of the 9-year-olds (4th graders) after a steady increase of their

scores in the 1970s.

I quote from the NAEP (p. 5): "Nine-year-olds assessed in 1988 read significantly better than their counterparts assessed in 1971. However, this progress was made during the 1970s."

If we assume that practice followed the changes in emphases of the basal readers and that they were further influenced by the reading conceptions of the whole language proponents, we should find more emphasis on language and cognition in the 1980s than in the 1970s. As noted above, a study of basal readers and manuals at the University of Illinois Center for the Study of Reading shows a greater focus on language and cognition and less on phonological aspects in the basal readers of the 1980s as compared to those of the 1970s. And yet the scores of the 9-year-olds declined in the 1980s, as compared to the 1970s, when the language/cognitive emphasis was greater. The scores of the 1970s increased when there was a stronger emphasis on learning letter-sound relations and less focus on language and cognition.

What about the 17-year-olds?

Comparing achievement at this level with instruction is more difficult. But even here we can gain some useful insights by examining the NAEP scores. On the 1988 assessment of NAEP, increases were found among the 17-year-olds. This is explained by NAEP as "due, at least in part, to an early advantage" in their reading scores when they were 9 in the 1970s (Mullis & Jenkins, 1990, p. 5).

Why these trends? Although the causal connection cannot yet

be fully validated, I believe that the evidence is sufficient that methods and materials do make a difference in students' reading achievement. And these trends from NAEP, it should be recalled, are similar to syntheses of the research of 80 years. When more focused studies are undertaken, we may, indeed, find that the beginning reading programs of the 1980s--programs that put a greater emphasis from the start on "whole language"--may indeed, at least in part, be related to the declines reported by NAEP in the scores of the 9-year-olds in the 1980s. Further, that the beginning reading programs of the 1970s, which paid more attention to the phonological, to the alphabetic principle, to decoding, to phonics, much maligned today, may have contributed to the rising scores of the 9-year-olds in the 1970s and to the higher scores of the 17-year-olds in the 1980s, as reported in NAEP's most recent Report Card.

These findings from NAEP confirm other studies and theories of reading--that the best fit for the data is that reading is cumulative, developmental, and needs different instructional emphases for different stages of development. Beginning reading may look the same as mature reading, but it is quite different. Beginning reading has much to do with phonology. As reading develops, it has more to do with language and reasoning (Chall, 1983a).

What does all of the above mean? First, I think it means that, although we have a very serious literacy problem and the reasons are broad and deep in socio-economic, cultural, and

neurological factors, there is much that can be done educationally--in schools. We can, on the basis of what has been found, make adjustments in the curriculum. And it points to the importance of basing practice on sound theory and research tested over extended periods of time. It points to the limited advantages and disadvantages of basing practice on philosophy and enthusiasm alone. The accumulated knowledge on literacy suggests that different aspects of reading be emphasized at different stages of reading development--and that success at the beginning is particularly essential since it influences not only early reading but reading at subsequent levels, even in high school and college. And that a beginning reading program that does not give children knowledge and skill in recognizing and decoding words will have poorer results.

The accumulated research indicates also that, while beginning reading is the responsibility of reading teachers, later reading cannot be left to reading and English teachers alone. Those teaching the various disciplines need to help students acquire the knowledge, the concepts, the special and general vocabularies, and the higher-level thinking in order to read with adequate comprehension in the middle grades, high school, and college. It is the various curricular areas--including English--that contribute to the knowledge, language, and cognitive development needed for academic success, for work in high technology, for responsible citizenship, and for making the personal choices in an increasingly complex world.

Why, one may ask, do we not base our methods on the existing research--especially when there is so much evidence?

For this we must consider more powerful forces at work--values, ideologies, philosophies, and appealing rhetoric. Since the early 1920s, there has been a preference for reading methods that start with whole words--what I called earlier a meaning emphasis--that shares the same philosophical and psychological conceptions of reading as whole language (Chall, 1967, 1983b). These methods were adopted following the great reforms of the late 1800s and early 1900s--the early childhood education movement, the child-centered curriculum. Similar to whole language, the whole word (meaning-emphasis) movement took on the qualities and values of love, care, and concern for children. Of first importance, the reforms of the 1920s claimed, was reading for understanding, from the start. Concern with print and phonological aspects of reading was seen then, and is seen now, as pulling the reader away from understanding and toward rote learning. The view in the 1920s was that concentrating on the reading of interesting stories (with little or no teaching of the forms and sounds of words) will result in better reading comprehension. Further, that this procedure will result in lifetime reading, while learning phonics is dull and dreary and discourages reading for pleasure. Although the research of the past 80 years has refuted these claims, they remain. And if they are relinquished for a period, they return, as new discoveries, under new labels.

Why have these concepts of reading returned? Why are they so persistent? I propose that they are deep in our American culture and therefore difficult to change. These conceptions promise a quick and easy solution to reading problems--i.e., reading without tears, reading full of joy. A magic bullet to solve our serious reading problem. Further, phonics requires knowledge, effort, and work. The whole word or whole language way has always promised more joy, more fun, and less work for the child--and for the teacher.

A one-stage theory of reading seems also more attractive to Americans than a sequential, developmental theory. Since the whole language and the reading comprehension proponents claim that reading is the same at the beginning and at the end, it does not require as much knowledge on the part of the teacher. If teachers know a few basic concepts, they can teach reading to beginners and to advanced students.

Whole language, in particular, seems to say that a good heart goes a long way, and the less teaching, the better. It fears rote learning more than no learning. Its major concern is with the use of higher cognitive processes, and it flees from "basics."

These views are being debated in other school subjects as well. In math, the current thrust is toward learning concepts and away from computations. In history, the concern is for teaching overall ideas, not facts. Although the National Assessments indicate that our children have deficiencies in the

most basic learnings (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1989), the current focus is away from teaching these and toward teaching concepts. Thus, as for reading, the preferred emphasis today in most areas of the curriculum is on the higher cognitive processes from the start.

I propose that it is these particular views of the child, of the teacher, and of learning--ones that have been with us for about a century--that are responsible, at least in part, for our tendency to accept or reject a particular conception of reading. This view attracts many teachers to whole language. it is a romantic view of learning. It is imbued with love and hope. But, unfortunately, according to the considerable research evidence and the literacy trends from NAEP, it has proven to be less effective than a developmental view, and least effective for those who tend to fall behind--low-income, minority children and those at risk for learning disability.

Since the 1920s, the prevailing ideology of reading has been one that views the child as self-motivated and joyous. When exposed to interesting reading materials, a child learns to read as naturally as he learns to speak, if only we encourage him to use his language and his cognition when he reads. Teaching skills and tools, especially those related to print, are to be avoided since they distract the learner from the naturalness of the process and the acquisition of meaning.

Very little is said about the children who have difficulty learning to read with an emphasis on language and cognition. If

asked to face the high incidence of difficulty, the answer one is often given is that poor reading stems from inappropriate instruction--instruction that focuses on teaching phonics and other skills.

The values and ideology I have tried to depict can be found in most reading programs from the 1920s on. From time to time there is a greater acceptance of the need for teaching skills and tools when it is realized that the children are falling behind--particularly the low-income, minority, and those at risk for learning disability. But historically, these periods seem to be short lived.

The reading methods that seem to have a strong hold on us are those that tend to be more romantic, charismatic, and global. And they hold us so strongly because we hold strongly to them in solving not only our curriculum problems but our economic, political, and social problems as well.

After I completed this paper, I found an apt illustration of this in the words of James David Barber, a political scientist at Duke University, in the New York Times, March 25, 1990, p. 32. With regard to American politics, he noted: "What happened in American politics is its drift to sentimentality and emotion, which substitute for looking at the facts that face you at the moment."

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CHRISTY C. BULKELEY

ANPA FOUNDATION LITERACY CONFERENCE

JULY 23, 1990

ANPA -FOUNDATION/1

Congress and the Executive Branch are in the process of granting adult literacy official status as a national issue or problem...as you have been hearing all morning.

My assignment is to react to what we've heard "both as a foundation executive and as a publisher. Do the federal programs and projects make sense? How will the federal programs affect what newspapers and newspaper foundations are doing and might do for literacy?"

I'll work from some basic assumptions:

--First that you have a working knowledge of the literacy challenge at the community level--at least adult literacy, probably education reform or improvement as well;

--Second, that you're here because you believe and have top management support for the belief that newspapers do have a stake in helping meet the challenge of illiteracy.

So: Do the federal programs and plans make sense? Yes, given the context.

Remember that this is the first time the adult literacy has been looked at as a national problem to be dealt with through an overall, coordinated policy approach. Given the challenge and complications of legislating and administering from the national level what are essentially individual programs, what we see emerging is a fine start.

Rep. Tom Sawyer -

But it's only a start. Lots remains to be done to translate the federal government action into effective learning for each and every individual. Some of that will cost money that isn't provided by government or isn't necessarily appropriate uses for tax dollars. I'll be glad to discuss possibilities with any foundation people or to share reports from two conferences we had last month looking at those needs.

Many specific ideas exist for what a newspaper can do. You're surrounded by people with ideas and experience to share; you can get more from the ANPA Foundation (ANPA) or ~~Simpsons~~. We probably could go around the room asking each of you to offer an idea that hasn't been mentioned by anyone else...and still have examples left over.

So

Instead of reciting examples, I want to give you the priorities I'd set and act on, if I were a publisher today:

1. First, I'd make sure all of my employees and independent contractors who wanted and needed to develop or improve their reading, writing and arithmetic skills had that opportunity. I'd make it as easy as possible. I'd make learning an expectation of the job...including arithmetic in the newsroom. Important for credibility in the community

Your motor route drivers need to be able to read the customer service slips. Onceuponatime, they did all the selling and collecting on their routes. They knew which house was the new customer, which was vacant for vacation, which was cut off for nonpayment. With the office handling so many more transactions--PIAs, starts and stops, variable-day deliveries--motor route drivers need to be able to read.

Your mailroom folks need to be able to read. No longer can they get by simply by matching the dates on the insert with the date on the advance sections they're stuffing. Mailroom equipment increasingly requires reading and arithmetic and the use of reading and arithmetic.

Your newspaper's telephone answerer needs to be able to read. No longer can the operator get by simply by memorizing positions on a switchboard and knowing which reporter or editor or sales representative handles which topics.

Your maintenance staff needs to be able to read the instructions and warnings on all the different chemicals and machinery and surfaces involved in keeping your buildings up. Red sweeping compound and an all-purpose soap or detergent have long since disappeared from the janitor's closet.

And have you thought lately about the kinds of specialists who replaced your printers--printers meaning those people who rekeyboarded material from your news and ad departments? In the olden days, many of them read and absorbed the stories and ads they handled. But some survived by copying.

2. Second, I'd see that I had at least one reporter--just one reporter--who knows learning and the inside of classrooms as well as an average sports reporter knows losing and the inside of locker rooms.

Learning and learners don't all look alike. Many of us can only just barely tell one sport from another, let alone identify the teams and players. If my taxes and the viability of my business depended on sports...as they depend on the effective learning of the people in my community...I might pay more attention.

3. Third, I'd see that my editorial page understood the many complex issues involved with learning--starting with those discussed this morning,

...but also with creating and maintaining learning as a community standard,

...a right and expectation for all, from the newest baby to the most senior adult,

...a right and expectation we must all be responsible for achieving

...and that through consistent editorializing and other discussion of the issues, it exercised strong leadership in the struggle to make that learning community a reality.

A learning community, as I see it, is one in which the public schools have been transformed and restored as community places, in line with the best models appropriate to the community. Those models do exist.

A learning community is one in which adult literacy programs are as available and as helpful as the improved K-12 system is.

A learning community is one in which the champions of both of those parts work together to share the best practices...and to involve all the other community agencies and institutions

...to be sure babies are born with the best chance possible to be learning contributing citizens, to be sure their parents AND extended family know how to help...from day one...

...a community where the unemployed and underemployed, the welfare recipients, the blind, the deaf, and everyone else knows how to get learning help and how to help others...

...in sum, a community where learning is a conscious part of the routine.

4. Once those basics were in place, I'd find the most appropriate community service roles for my newspaper as a community citizen and act as resources permitted.

Now, I want to go back to the question of learning, learning and coverage, learning and community leadership for more detail. ASNE literacy Contest - CWA - Dozens of story ideas + issues - will send the report being written as we speak

I share the belief of those who see all learning a right of all citizens. It's necessary for the health of the democracy. And because it happens one person at a time, each one of us can make a difference, if we only knew what was happening and how to help.

We know that all people can learn, given a fair chance.

Unhappily, we also know that not enough every day citizens understanding ~~existence~~ of either the problems facing our schools or the problems facing adults who need literacy help...let alone how to help. Ted Sanders talked about the "disconnect"

So the trick is to figure out how to be sure the public consensus moves toward making that learning available.

I think that can be done. Learning is a need of most people most of the time, even if they don't label what they're doing as learning.

For instance: How many of you consider the mission of your newspaper as helping readers learn? Yet isn't that the point of most information you publish every day...helping people learn something they didn't know but wanted to know or needed to know? And isn't that learning?

Beyond that, learning is an interest of many people much of the time. Learning is paid for by all of us all of the time. — we also pay when people fail to learn

Whether your newspaper's immediate interest is the adult literacy component or the K-12 reform efforts, pre-school or prison...
learning is critical to the health and future of any democracy...and, given the chance through solid and useful information, the democracy will respond.

So let's think about ways to cover learning as a day in/day out, compelling part of democracy. And let's take our lessons from existing newspaper practices:

Think about the pages and pages of routine sports statistics and stories of local games played by all ages. Remember how much is reported by the participants rather than by the newspaper staff. So ...

What if we...set up a format...and invited -- as newspaper invite Little League and bowling leagues and myriad other local people and groups-- what if we invited kids to call every day and report the score or bottom line -- from their classes -- to report WHAT THEY LEARNED TODAY?

Or if teachers called to report what they think they helped kids learn today?

What if we did the same with each adult literacy program or learning center in the community...what if we had someone trained to call in WHAT WAS LEARNED TODAY?

What if we opened the formal learning season with the playbook?

--Instead of stuffing the back-to-school section with boilerplate, why not publish it as the school year playbook

...with the description of each teacher's game plan for each class or team of students...

...and with the starting line up -- including summaries of the strengths and record of each teacher - based on LEARNING they made possible.

What if we watched a classroom as closely as some watch a game -- to see whether all students get to play -- or whether only the white boys are allowed/asked to ask and answer questions (as some recent research suggests).

What if we had two Leagues-- maybe the Lecture-and-memorize-facts league compared with the participate-in-learning league...

...or the technology-assisted league and the traditional league.

These would work, whether pre-school, K-12, adult ed or learning center.

What if we had Box Scores on the daily measures--and season summaries on the comprehensive results?

Maybe a columnist or analyst needs to write running commentaries speculating on the learning outcome of the new computer lab and reporting -- political campaign horse-race style -- on progress toward that outcome.

Play book

If sports formats and box scores don't appeal to you -- how about following the format of the SOAPS digests

...the ongoing saga of whether Dick and Jane will overcome the forces of evil

...evil of boredom or drugs or whatever...to become knowledgeable, informed, participating citizens?

...Will oldest child left in charge of latch-key siblings be able to help solve the mystery of the arithmetic homework?

...Will 20-year employee find the courage to ask for help reading and filling out the forms added to the work responsibility?

...Will the new bride be able to ~~give up cigarettes~~ beat her addiction BEFORE she gets pregnant and ~~reduces her first baby's capacity for learning~~ the substance abuse?

...Will the team learning with help from computers get ahead faster than those working only with real live teachers and tutors?

...Has the single father learned enough reading to find the medicine that will stop his kid's reaction to a bee sting before it's too late?

Stay tuned!

Or if sports and soaps aren't compelling in your community...maybe the business pages are.

So how 'bout the quarterly reports on the key indicators of vitality in schools and learning labs..the measures designed to measure the substance and daily value of the institutions of learning...to their consumers. The old standardized test scores and the other old basic, costs-per-pupil without analysis, are close to obsolete, by the way.

But enough.

You get the idea:

The real point is we simply must find ways to accomplish community-relevant coverage of all the issues we've heard about today
...and to reach even beyond those

...to be sure newspaper pages reflect learning in its many vital forms as something most of your community is engaged in much of the time.

My only caution is to remind you that in coverage of learning there can be no losers.

If an adult isn't becoming functionally literate through help available in your community...if youngsters aren't ready to learn when they reach school age...if older youngsters are dropping out for whatever reason...they're not the losers.

We are. The democracy is.

Please go home committed to bringing your newspaper...your community onto side of the winners.

Thank you.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

THE NEW LITERACY IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

By

Nat J. Colletta, Senior Education Specialist
Africa Region, World Bank

Thank you for inviting me to address this distinguished forum of newspeople, and to share with you new perspectives on literacy from the international and economic vantage points.

Over the past year I have been engaged in rethinking what we know about the role and function of literacy in the process of social and economic development, and what we have learned about the meaning and process of becoming literate. I worked on this exercise as the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Inter-agency Commission of the World Conference on Education for All, or EFA for short.

This initiative was organized under the joint sponsorship of the World Bank, Unesco, Unicef, and the UNDP, and joined by some 22 co and associate sponsoring donor agencies, 155 countries, 125 NGOs, and a host of other inter-governmental bodies and private citizens. During the course of the year numerous countries set-up national EFA commissions, 11 regional conferences were held, and a World Declaration and Framework for Action were adopted at the culminating global conference in Jomtien, Thailand on March 9, 1990.

Education for All means many things to many persons. To some it means getting every child of primary school age into a quality primary school. This goal is sometimes referred to as achieving Universal Primary Education. To others EFA means providing basic life sustaining and enhancing knowledge and skills to all out-of-school youth and adults. And to yet others, EFA means eradicating illiteracy by the turn of the century. To the core sponsoring agencies of the EFA initiative it means all of these goals as a mutually reinforcing thrust to provide a "basic" education for all.

Today, I would like to limit my comments to some new thinking that has emerged from the past year's EFA experience. However, coming from the World Bank, at the risk of boring you with facts and statistics with which you probably already are familiar, please allow me to give a brief summary of the state of literacy in the world and the economic rationale for promoting literacy.

In 1990 there are an estimated 882 million people aged fifteen years and over who are illiterate, 27.7 percent of the world's adult population. Nearly 98 percent of the world's illiterates live in developing countries. Asia remains the heart of the problem with about 659 million illiterates; Africa has about 165 million, and Latin America and the Caribbean region 42 million. North America and Europe has about 17 million illiterates, but

the position of these individuals is particularly disadvantageous in relation to the basic learning needs of their societies.

The evidence for the need to promote literacy is now overwhelming. From the development economist point of view there is a positive correlation between literacy level and such socio-economic indicators as worker productivity, fertility behavior, and infant and maternal mortality rates. What is less certain is the causal chain, that is, the interaction between conditions of poverty and literacy acquisition. This brings me to the question which I would like to place before you. What is the meaning of literacy in the global village?

For years Unesco and others have treated literacy predominantly as an end, a disease to be "erradicated" like smallpox or polio. At best, literacy was a skill functionally related to some other end like the acquisition of family planning and health information, or a vocational skill. The EFA initiative broke with this conceptualization and began to discuss literacy in terms of being "an essential learning tool" along with oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving. As such the definition of literacy was also expanded to encompass such aspects as computer literacy, library use, and the ability to interpret messages relayed by radio, television, and emerging information systems.

The learning tools defined as "essential" would depend on each country's present context and expectations for development. The essential learning tools were distinguished from the "basic learning needs or content". The latter were viewed as an array of knowldege and skills organized to meet the basic needs of learners, both as individuals and as actors in the contexts of the family, the work place, and the community.

For example, basic knowldege and skills could address the need of the individual for self-esteem, knowledge of one's language and cultural heritage, and understanding of gender roles and social relationships. In the family and household sphere, there is the need to plan and manage a household and to raise healthy children, therefore, to know about health, nutrition, and infant care. Learning needs relating to community life include knowledge about civic rights, clean environment, and community organization and advocacy. Learning for the workplace focusses on the skills required to earn a living and adapt to changing economic and technological conditions.

In other words, becoming literate in our increasingly complex global village no longer can be limited to being able to read and write one's name or a simple sentence, but now has to be expanded to being able to critically process symbols whether they be on paper, a computer monitor or a video screen to solve one's problems.

In fact, I am astounded how often people confuse being able to read by Unesco standards (typically four years in school) with reading per se, especially reading books. Recently while in the Philippines a novelist friend reminded me that while over 80 percent of the Filipinos were declared literate, few actually read. He supported his statement by pointing out that his recent novel "Mass" was now translated into 17 languages and sold some 35,000 copies in the Netherlands, yet less than 2,500 copies sold in the Philippines. He challenged me with the "real" problem of moving people from literacy to reading in the third world. I

suppose one could take this a step further by asking how to move from reading to thinking throughout the literate world. It is clear to me that in much of the third world within America, not to mention the third world out there, books have not yet become an institution.

Coming full cycle, how does this notion of literacy and the habit of reading fit with our earlier question of causality. In my mind the culprit is poverty and not illiteracy per se. When people are so consumed with acts of survival they can hardly think of buying nor reading books, nonetheless newspapers. It is not paradoxical that the poorest countries in the world have the highest illiteracy rates. The convergence of disadvantage spelling poverty has illiteracy as but one strand, and the motivation to become literate somewhere down the line of basic needs.

So, in a way, I am more inclined to challenge this group to seek ways to address poverty as a means of promoting literacy and not the reverse. What might this mean for newspeople? Sure, on the micro-level one can talk of special columns or printed materials for new or emerging literates; or filling niches between full blown novels and classic comic books to move literates to the stage of readers I alluded to earlier. Or, playing the role of advocate for illiterates by telling their story. All of this you are probably already doing and I hope you will continue. However, it seems to me that newspeople can do more for the promotion of literacy by putting poverty back on the front pages of America, drawing the connection between the new literacy described above and the provocation of a vision for America's role in the global village of the 21 th. century. The World Bank has returned to the poverty theme in its' 1990 World Development Report. It may just be time for all of us to re-invent "poverty alleviation."